



Support Persons and Doulas during labour

Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service acknowledges the important role support persons can provide women* in labour and birth. Support persons including a doula, can share in a woman's experience, together with Gold Coast Health midwives and obstetricians.

We understand that a woman's choice of support persons increases the likelihood of a positive birth experience and their level of satisfaction.

Support during labour

Depending on your individual circumstances labouring women are encouraged to have a birthing partner and one other support person present during this time.

While a woman may choose to swap her support team over a long labour, frequent changes are discouraged as this may impact the physiological process of labour.

Minimising the number of people reduces noise and disruptions, which safeguards the environment for all women in the birthing unit.

Children related to the labouring woman are welcome, if they are cared for by one of the support people.

If the labouring woman needs to go to the operating theatre, only one support person will be able to attend. If a general anaesthetic is required, support persons cannot attend the operating theatre.

With the labouring woman's consent, support people may be included in discussions about care.

There are also times where only one support person is permitted to support the woman, such as in an emergency, or for infection prevention and control reasons.

Safety is our priority

Support people and doulas are required to follow the direction and advice from our staff, particularly in an emergency.

Any person behaving in a way that is a direct threat to the wellbeing of another will be asked to leave.

What is a doula?

Doulas are non-medical birth assistants who provide physical comfort and emotional support during pregnancy, labour and during the early postnatal period. They complement the work of our healthcare professionals.

If you choose to engage a doula you should discuss your birth plan with your healthcare team (a midwife and/or obstetrician) and specify the level of support being offered.

At Gold Coast Health, doulas are expected to:

- complement the work of our midwives and obstetricians
- provide practical and emotional support, but not advice to the woman and/or partner during admission
- support active labour by providing coping strategies
- support positive communication between the woman and her healthcare team
- not impede hospital treatment or advice
- not hinder communication between staff and the woman and/or partners
- not perform clinical tasks
- Not speak for women or make decisions on their behalf
- not present options for care, even if previously trained as a medical professional.



Care our team provides

Gold Coast Health's midwifery and medical team will:

- provide all clinical assessments and care to labouring women
- take observations such as temperature, pulse, blood pressure and fetal heart rate
- provide care of the newborn at birth
- share information with support person and/or doula with permission from the woman.

Want more information?

The role of the doula is not regulated, though some doulas may complete a Doula Training Program. Unregistered health practitioners in Queensland are governed by a minimum standard of health service provision under the National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers (Queensland) which was introduced in 2015.

Scan the QR Code to read more about the standard of service that should be provided.



Promoting and accommodating Birth Support Partners is grounded in human rights, including the rights of women and the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

Gold Coast Health endorses the Birth Support Partner joint statement provided by The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG), and the Australian College of Midwives (ACM).

*GCHHS acknowledges the gender diversity of all pregnant people. Where the term women/woman is used in our documents, this includes all people requiring midwifery, gynaecological and obstetric care.

Artwork produced for Gold Coast Health by Riki Salam, We are 27 Creative.
PUB.0317.01

